ON THE ROAD TO FIND OUT

SHANGHAI 1949

KITKAT GENTLEMAN'S LOUNGE
ZHONGSHAN ROAD, INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENT
SHANGHAI, REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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ZHONGSHAN ROAD, INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENT
SHANGHAI, REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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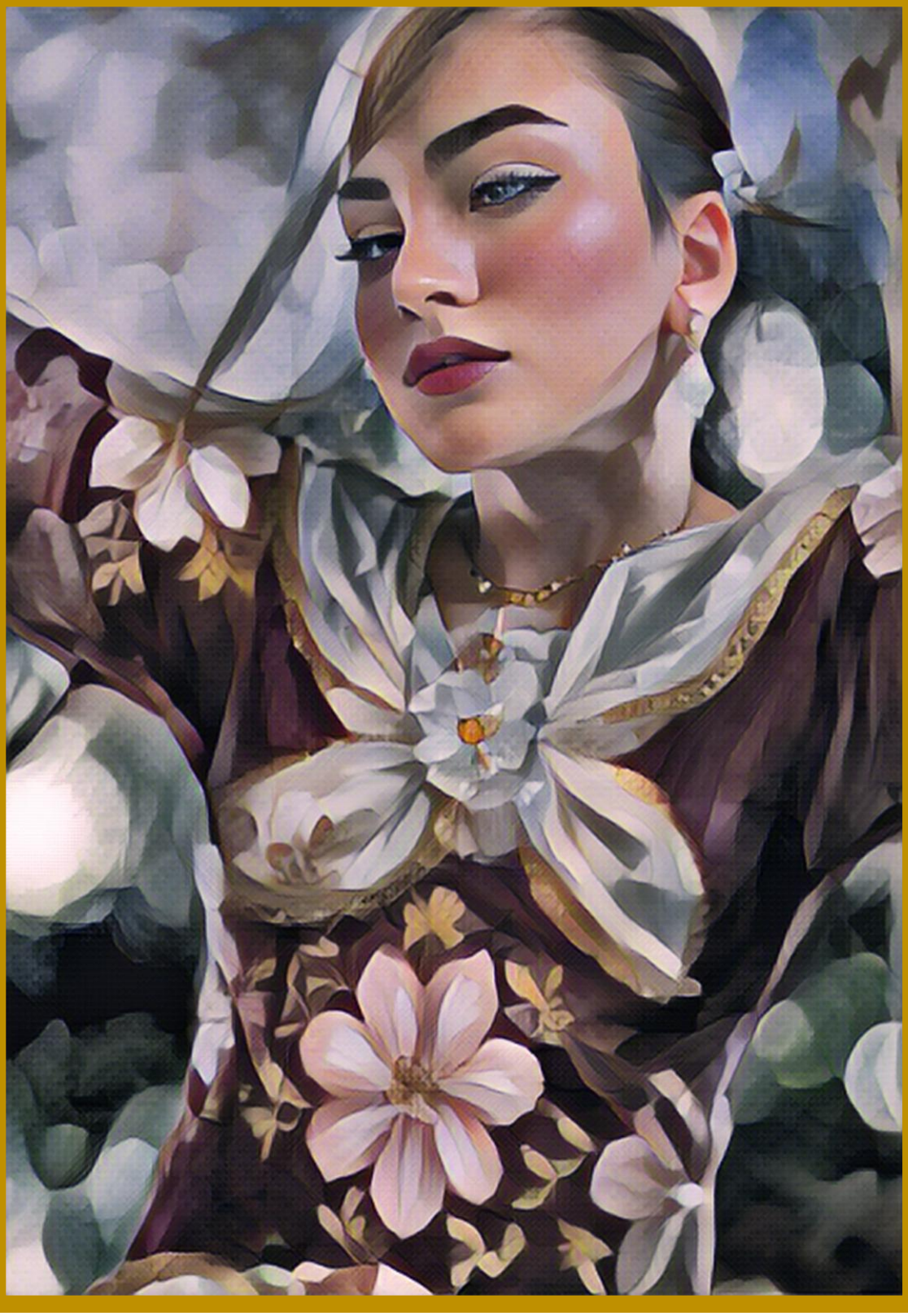
Saturday, April 30, 1949 at 18:50 GMT
(SENT BY INTERNATIONAL TELEX)

ON THE ROAD TO FIND OUT

The reflection from the striking gaze of my current translator and investment advisor, Miss Lin Sen, revealed the toll that the civil war had taken on me, forcing my return to Shanghai.
As I stood before her, I was confronted with the stark reality of my own deterioration, both physically and emotionally.



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The vibrant city around us seemed to contrast sharply with the shadow of despair that had enveloped me since the conflict began.

Her eyes, filled with a mixture of compassion and concern, mirrored the wreckage I had become, serving as a painful reminder of the vitality I once possessed.

In that moment, I realized just how much I had withered away, not only in body but also in spirit, as the weight of my experiences pressed heavily upon me.

In my previous correspondence, I

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mentioned that I have secured a booth at one of the few remaining, revitalized gin joints in Shanghai, the renowned KitKat Gentleman's Lounge, which has been a staple since 1949.

This establishment still offers a glimmer of opportunity for profit in these waning days before the Communist forces emerge from their strongholds to sweep away the last remnants of Chiang's loyalist troops, much like the morning refuse.

The atmosphere here is thick with nostalgia and the scent of history, as patrons gather to savor the fleeting

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moments of a bygone era, all while the city braces for the inevitable changes that loom on the horizon.

In the last week, the atmosphere has been charged with chaos, particularly evident among the ROC Tai Pans, who have been witnessing rampant looting. Seine emphasized the necessity of maintaining a discreet presence at the Grand Majestic Boarding House, as the remaining military garrison and disgruntled party officials, feeling abandoned after being excluded from the looting frenzy and deserted by the Allied Command, have resorted to

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indiscriminate theft and violence. Their frustration and desire for revenge have manifested in a dangerous pattern of targeting anyone who resembles a Western foreigner, driven by the realization that their party leaders and aging generals are hastily fleeing the scene.

This exodus was underlined last week when the English Consulate packed up its operations and departed for Hong Kong, leaving behind a volatile situation that has escalated tensions and fears among the local population.

Seine revealed that he had received

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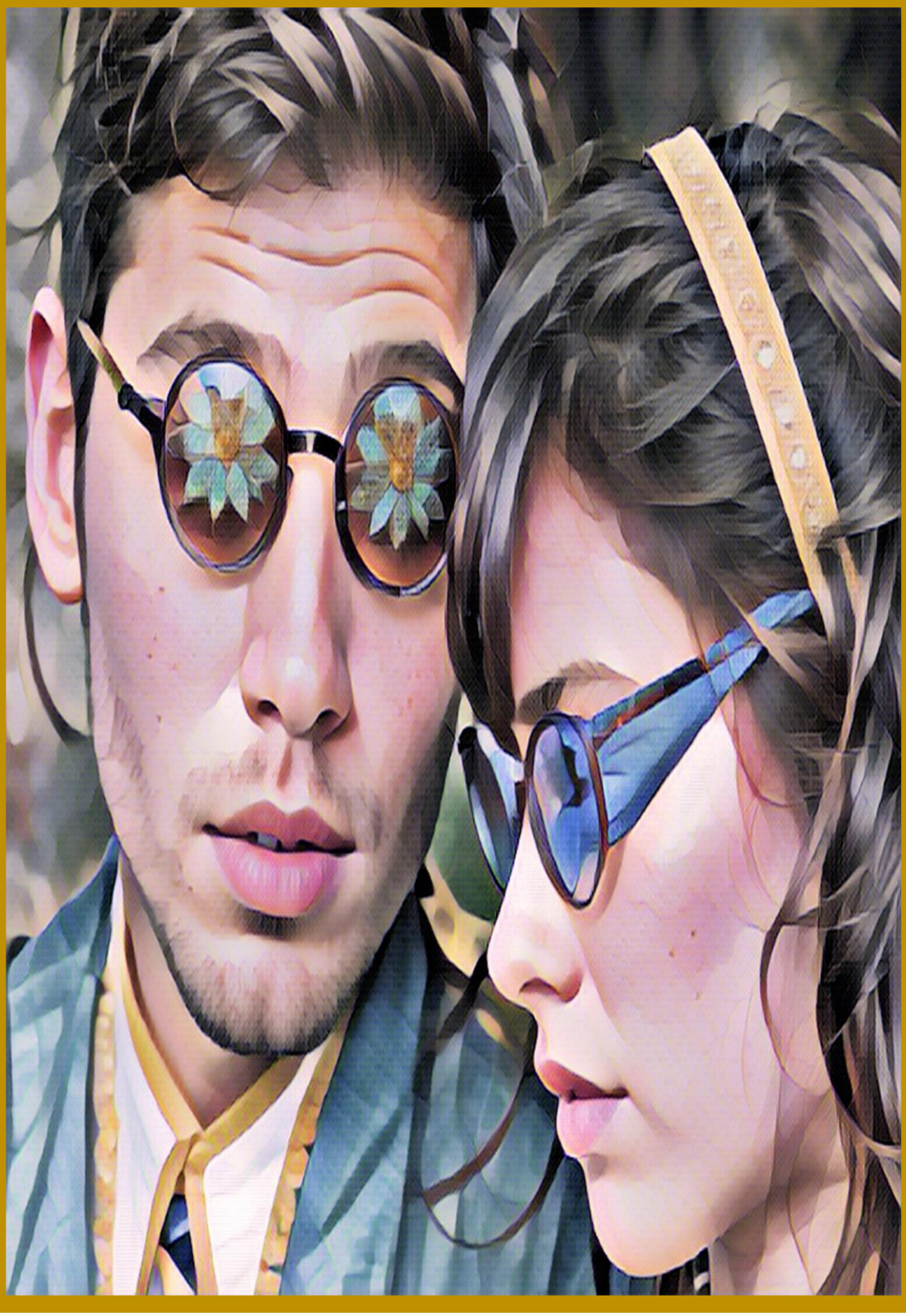

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information from trustworthy contacts within the lower ranks of the retreating Nationalist military command, which was tasked with safeguarding the Shanghai Front and maintaining access to the last significant city still under government control.

According to these sources, high-ranking officials were cowardly orchestrating a well-planned and systematic effort to strip the city of its valuable assets.

As they prepared to flee into exile, these officials aimed to take with them everything of value, leaving the city

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vulnerable and impoverished in their wake.

This alarming revelation paints a picture of desperation and betrayal at the highest levels of government, as those in power prioritize their own safety over the welfare of the city and its ten million inhabitants.

Recognizing that our immediate security and the ability to make a swift exit from the city hinged on Seine's involvement in this intricate scheme, I felt a pressing need to interrogate him about the whereabouts of the Nationalist leaders.

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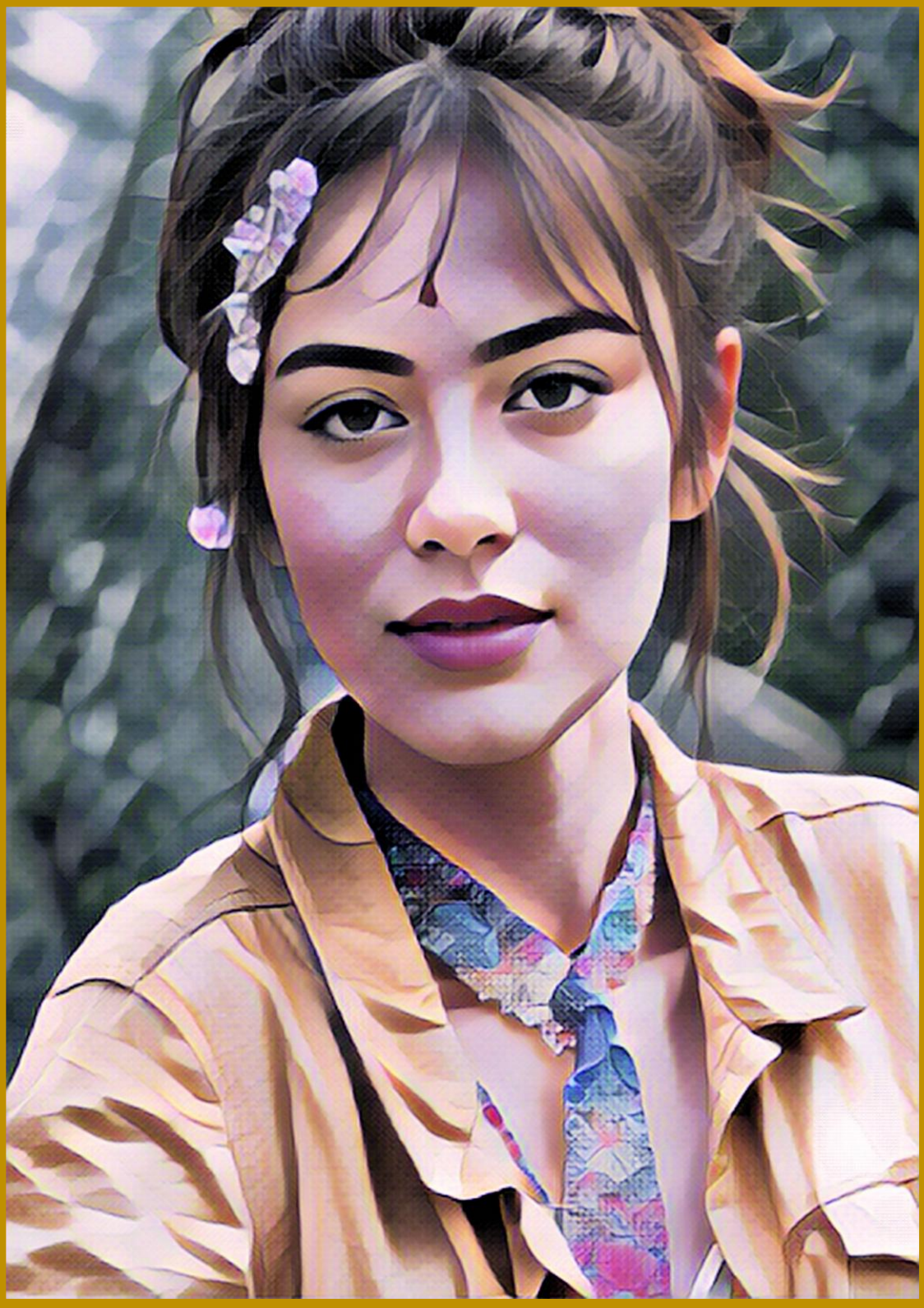

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My anxiety was compounded by concerns regarding the timeline of the impending crisis; I vividly recalled the panic of missing the last truck out of Nanjing, a memory that haunted me and prompted me to question Seine's preparedness for our escape plan. His vague assurance of "SOON!" did little to alleviate my fears, and I found myself increasingly frustrated by his reluctance to divulge crucial information.

This led me to probe deeper into the political ramifications of our situation, specifically asking which neighboring

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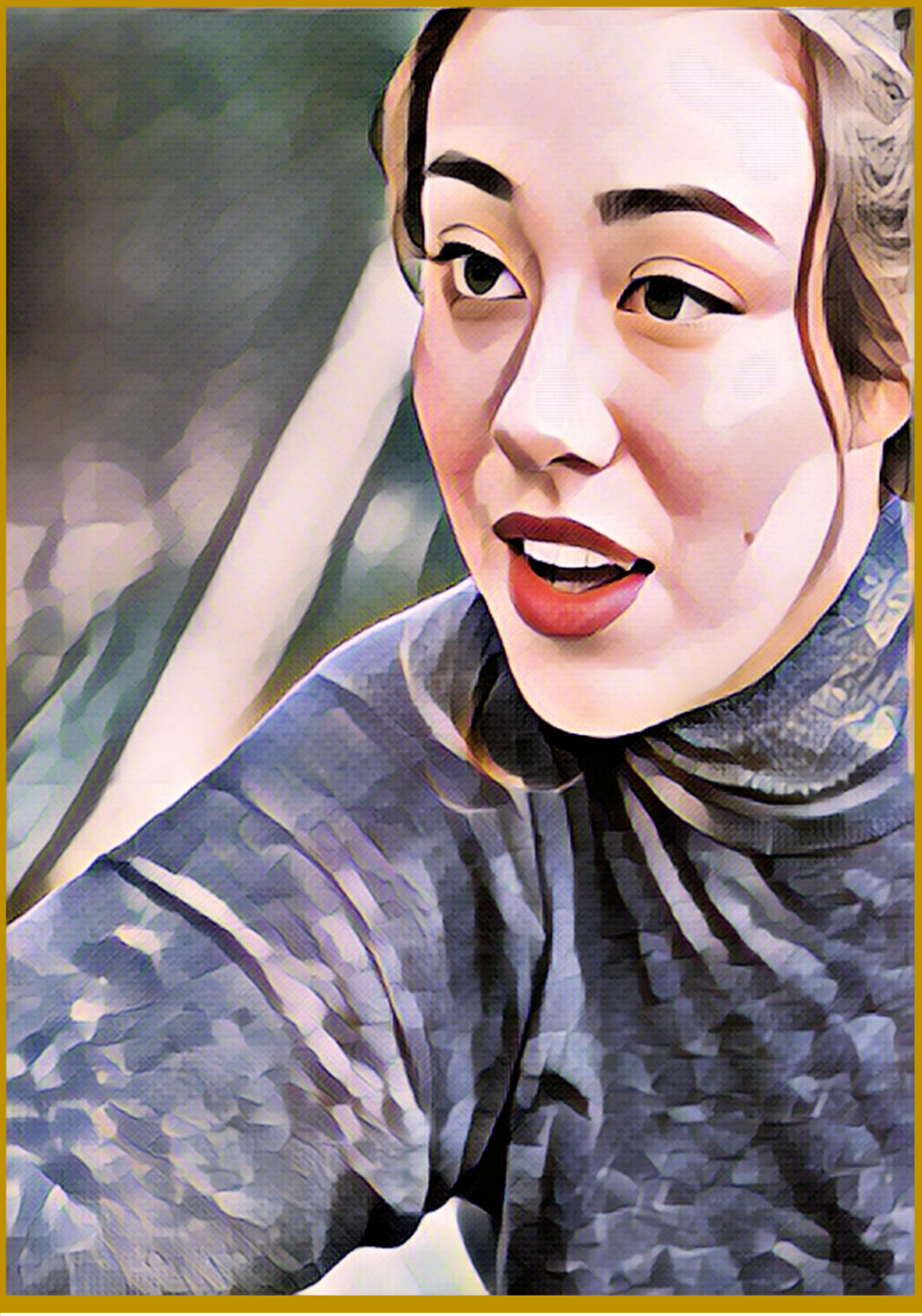

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country would be willing to accept a flood of political refugees, regardless of the wealth they might carry with them. It dawned on me that this could very well be the underlying reason for the pervasive secrecy surrounding our escape.

It appears that the few remaining low-level city officials in the International Zone have been completely left uninformed, relying on the excuse that only Chiang's most devoted generals are privy to the details of their retreat. While I typically avoid spreading unfounded rumors or engaging in fear

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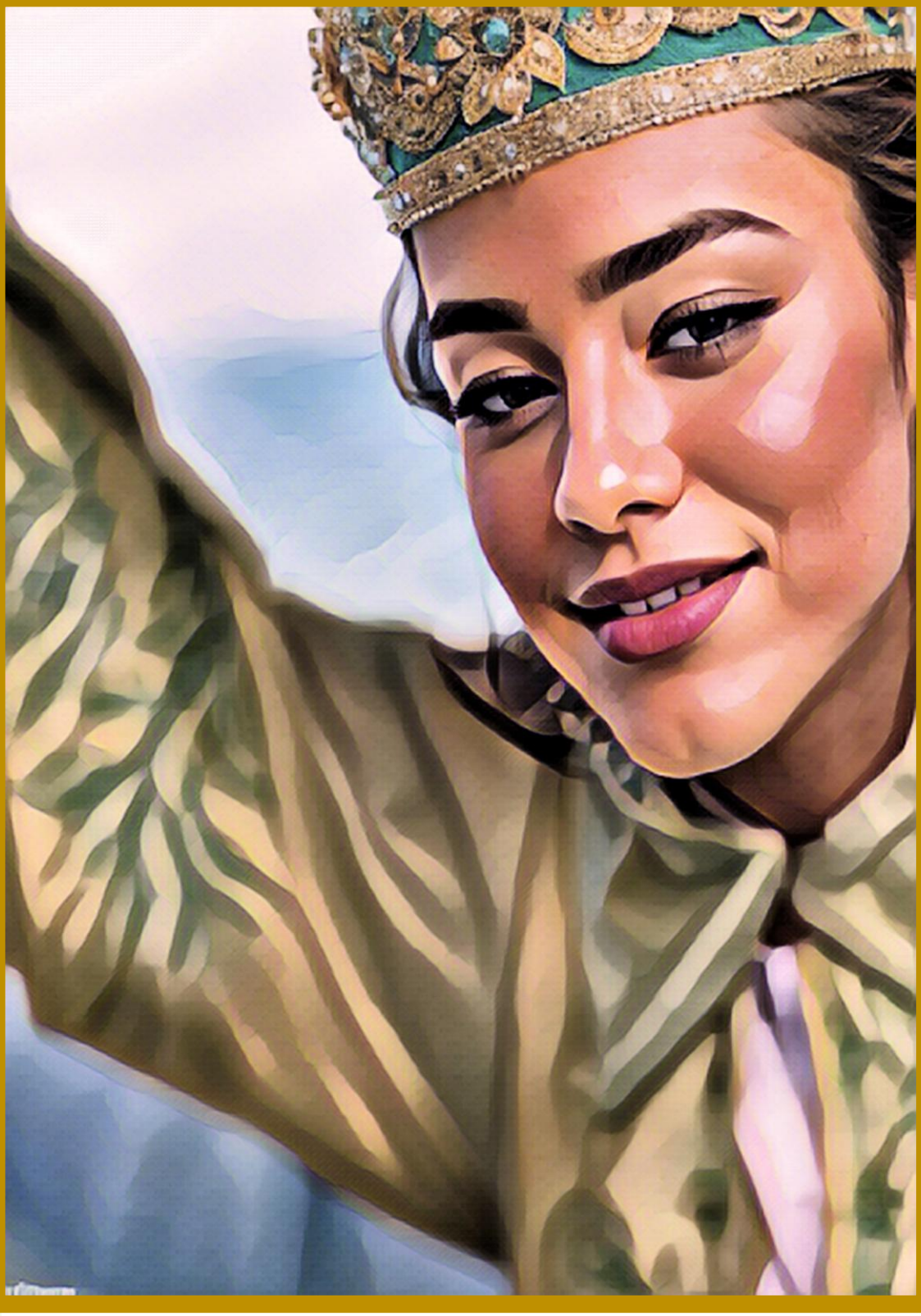

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-mongering, I can attest to having overheard some intriguing discussions in the quieter corners of the KitKat. These conversations, conducted in hushed tones that seemed unnaturally polite, hinted at a potential relocation of the government to the fortified island of Formosa.

The atmosphere was thick with tension, as patrons exchanged furtive glances, suggesting that the stakes were high and the future uncertain.

In my view, it is quite reasonable to assert that even General MacArthur recognized the futility of attempting to

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capture that island.

I recently came across an article in the Straits Times that reinforced my belief: had the Japanese not been compelled to surrender by their Emperor, the Allies would likely still be engaged in a protracted conflict against a formidable Japanese Army Group well into the next century.

Historical accounts consistently highlight the island's resilience, with Time Magazine famously dubbing it an "unsinkable aircraft carrier."

This characterization underscores the strategic significance and the daunting

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challenges posed by the island, which has long been regarded as a tough adversary in military history.

In anticipation of a potential abrupt collapse of the Shanghai Front, Seine dispatched Mister Claudie to Hong Kong with the urgent task of facilitating the transfer of our interests to the newly reinstated British Colonial Services.

Additionally, he was to explore the possibility of securing a visa from the Free French Authority that would allow us to return to French Indo-China.

I took the time to brief him on our

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strategic plans, including the rather dubious ferry ticket Seine had managed to book for us—a slow boat out of China scheduled for later this week.

We all agreed that it was imprudent to wait idly for the situation to deteriorate further, especially with the looming threat of Communist forces potentially taking over city hall.

It may seem perplexing that I was able to reach Claudie, especially considering my earlier reports about the dire state of communication here in Shanghai's International Zone.

I had mentioned that the regular

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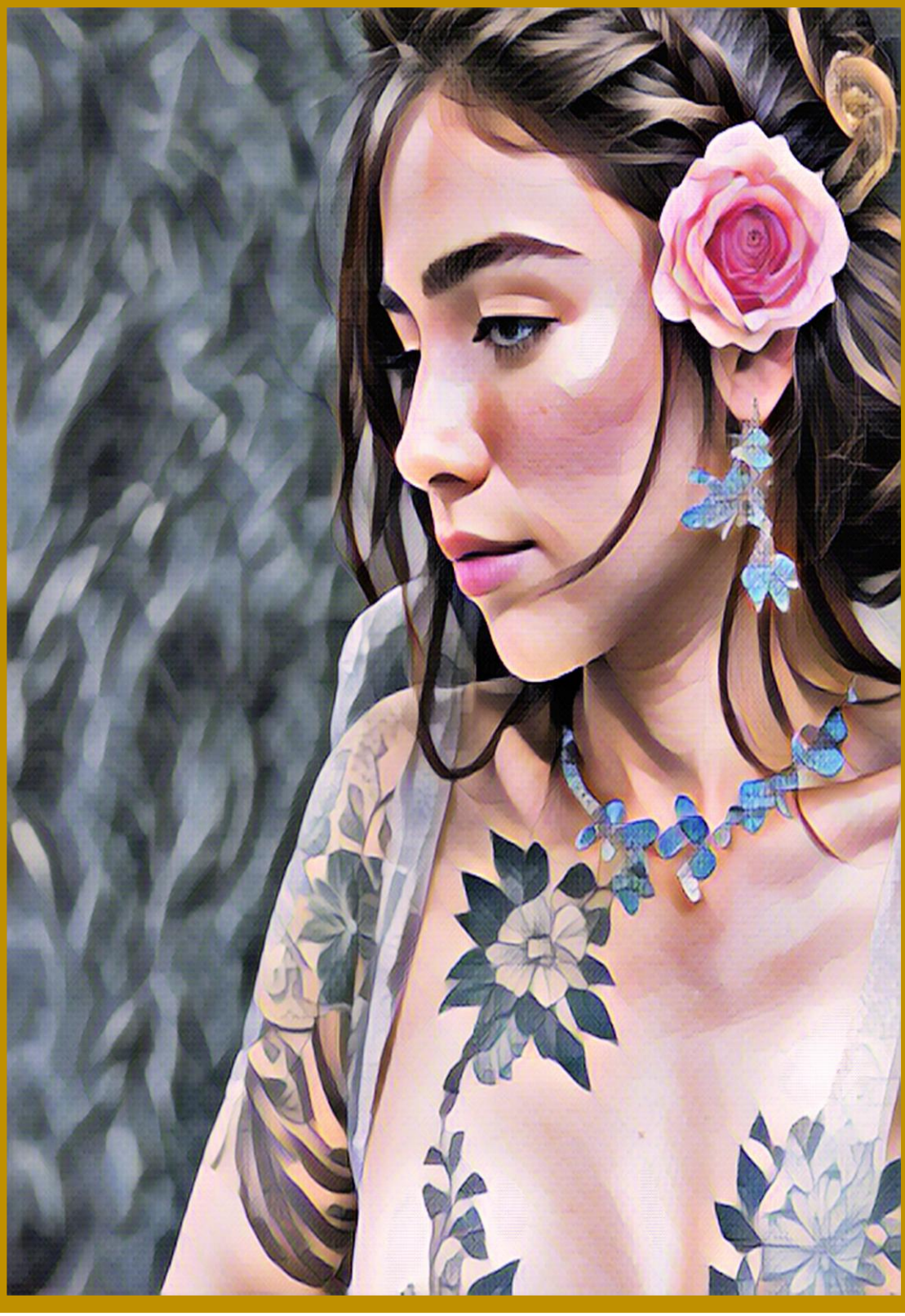

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telephones might never function again, a situation exacerbated by Chiang's men, who have gone to extreme lengths to dismantle the infrastructure. They have stripped away all the electrical wiring from public buildings, including the Grand Majestic, leaving nothing operational in anticipation of the Communist takeover.

This deliberate sabotage has created a sense of urgency and desperation, making any form of communication feel like a small miracle amid the chaos.

In times of desperation, it's remarkable how a determined spirit can attract

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unexpected support, often in the form of divine intervention or sheer luck. For those of us navigating the challenges of life, a well-timed gesture can make all the difference.

Consider the impact of a few carefully selected bottles of premium, aged American whiskey tucked away in the hidden wine cellar of the KitKat. This seemingly modest gesture cultivated me significant goodwill among the local Allied American Military Officers, who, despite the looming dangers, have resolutely chosen to remain in the area.

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Their commitment is underlined by the fact that they still maintain operational communication lines, with trunk calls to Hong Kong having been reestablished just last year.

Such small tokens of appreciation hold great importance, as their steadfast presence not only reinforces their own community ties but also serves as a crucial support system for the expatriate community residing in the International Zone.

- **Emil, 1949**

Grand Majestic Boarding House
Shanghai, Republic of China

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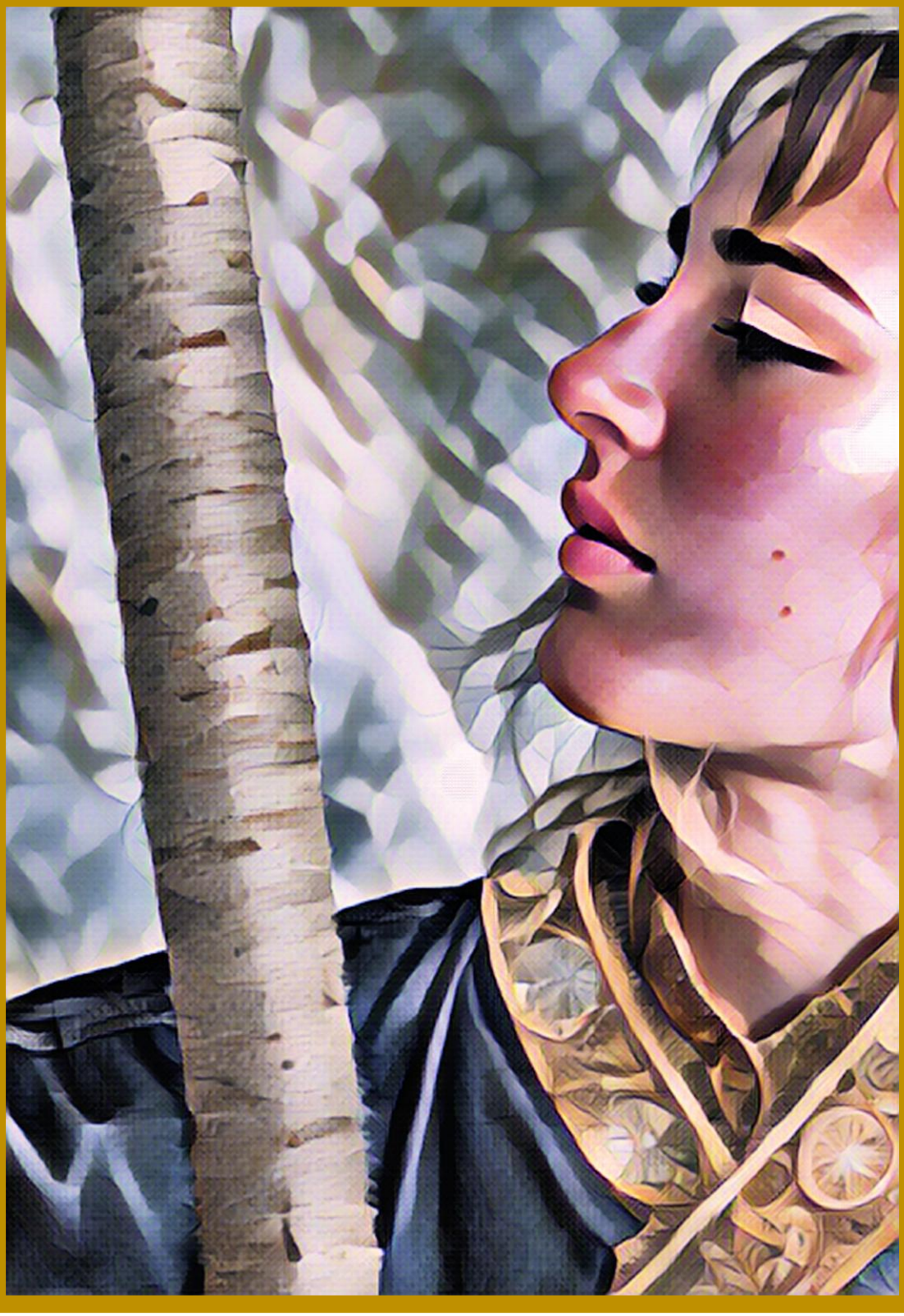

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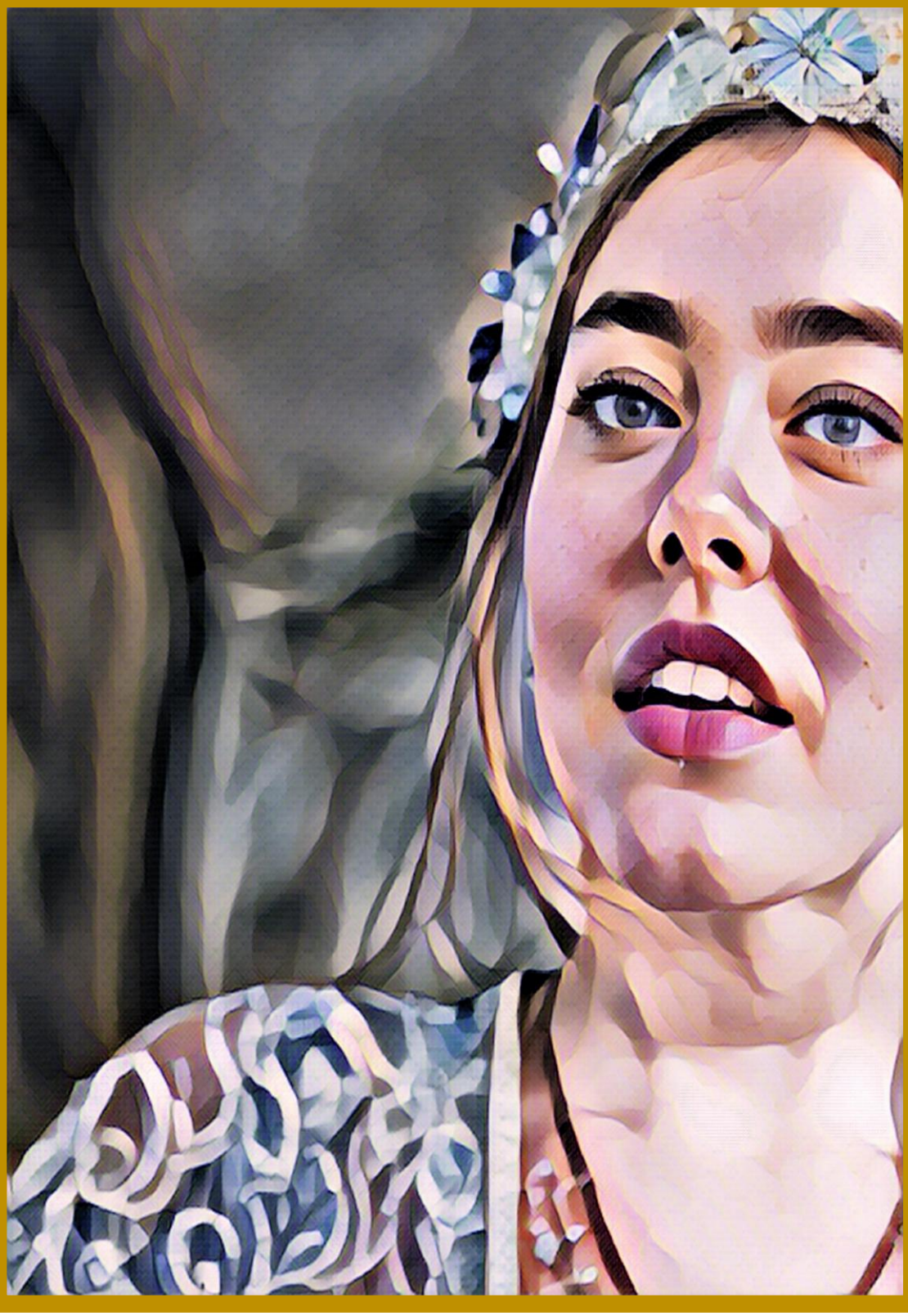

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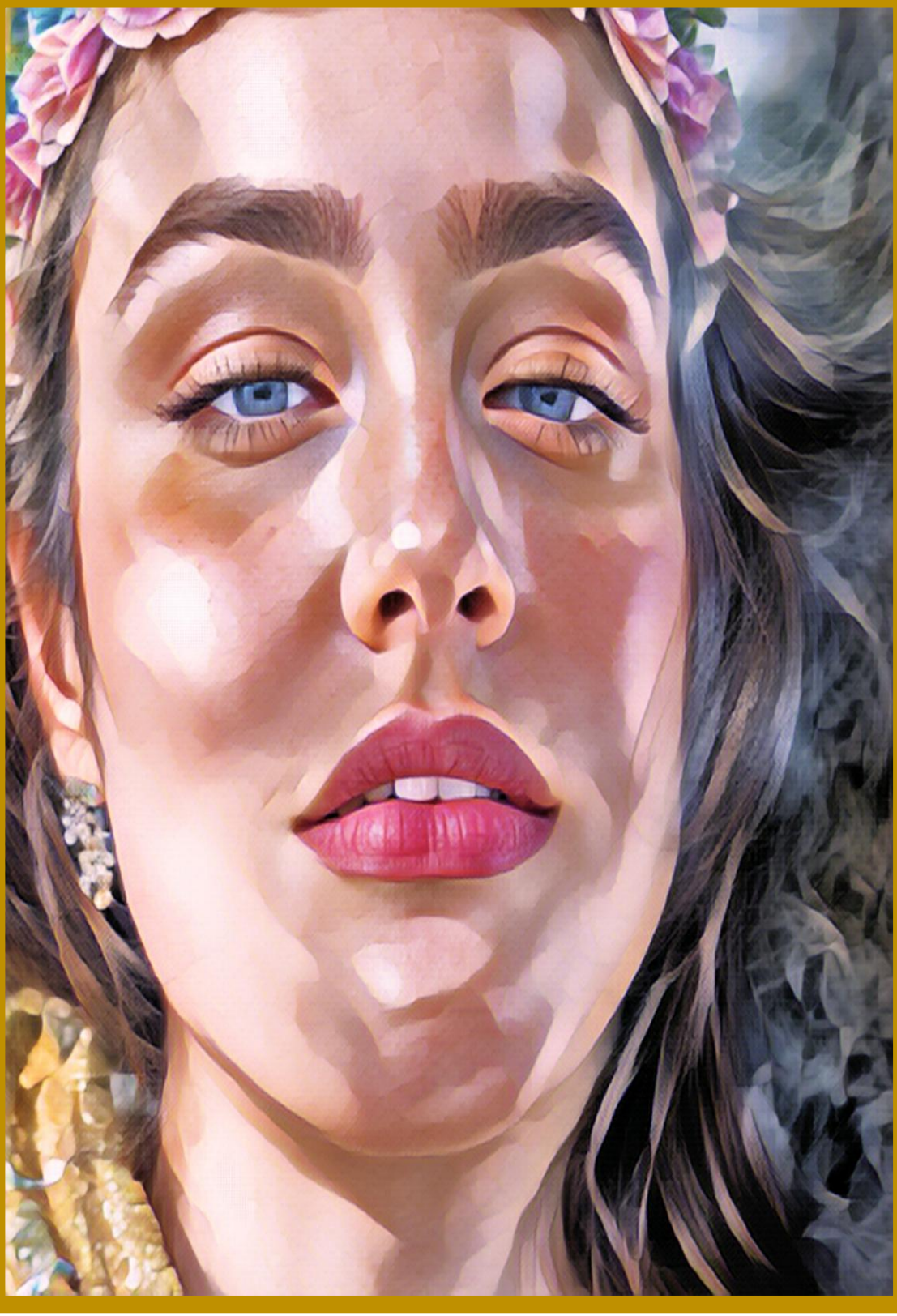

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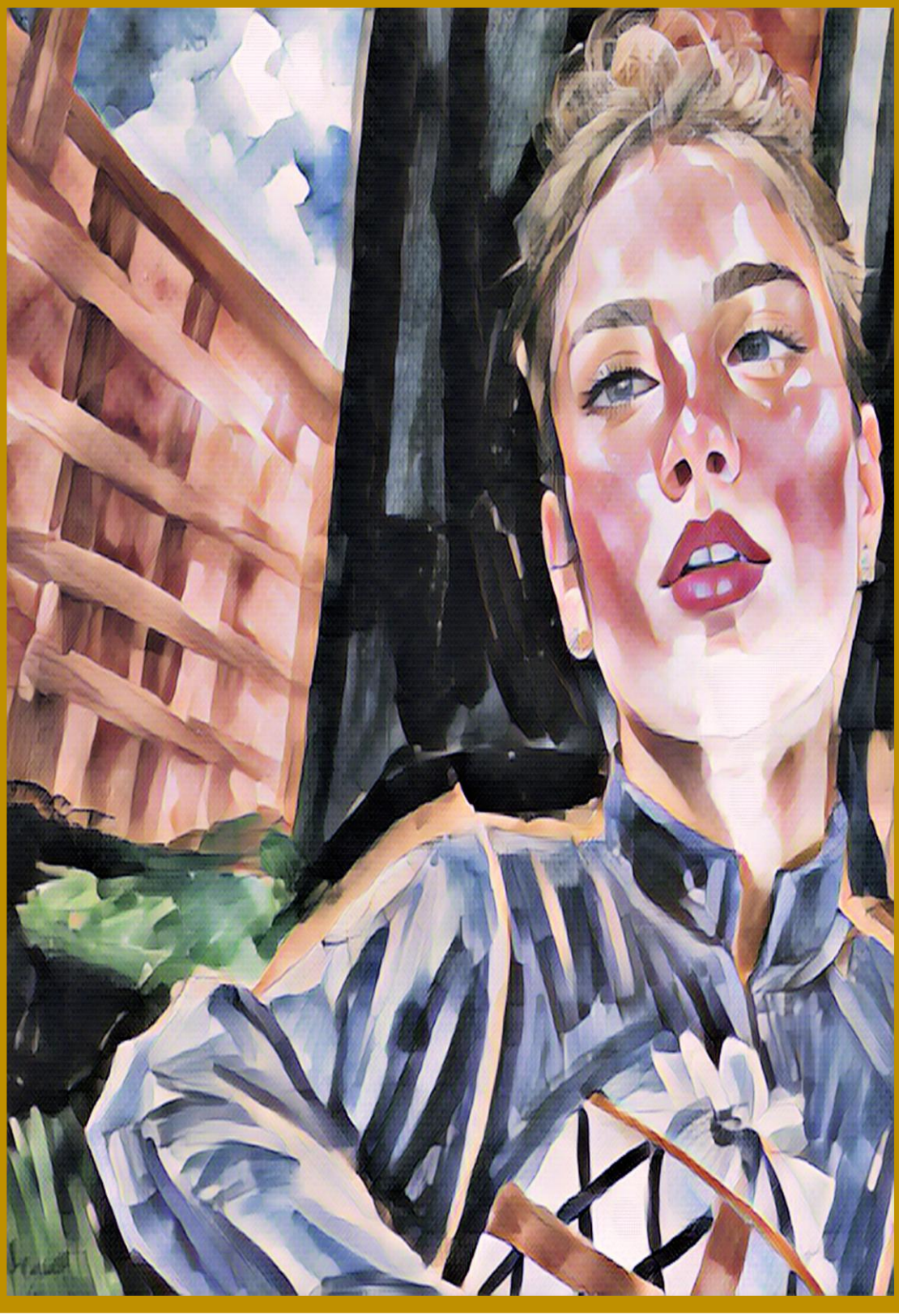

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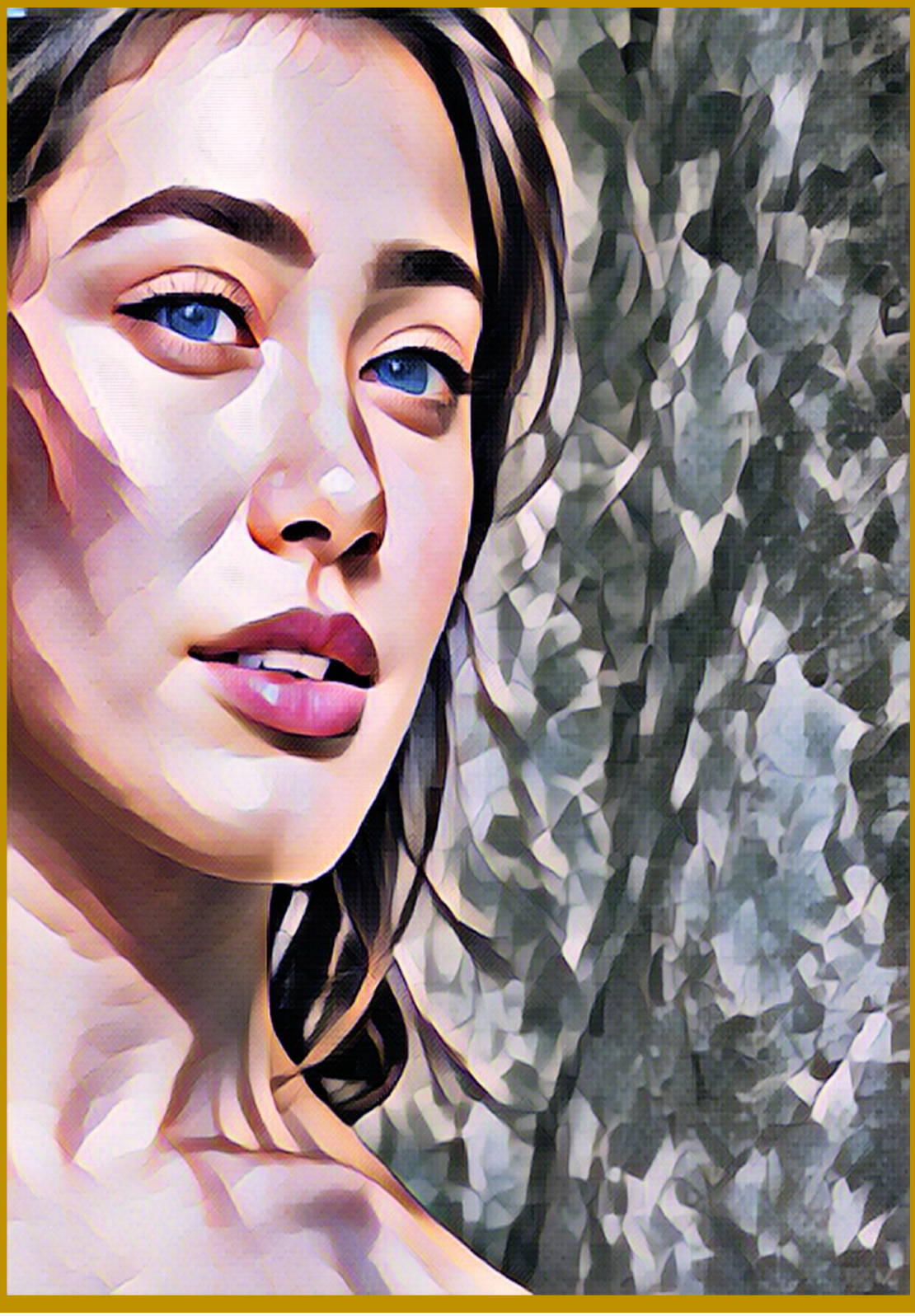

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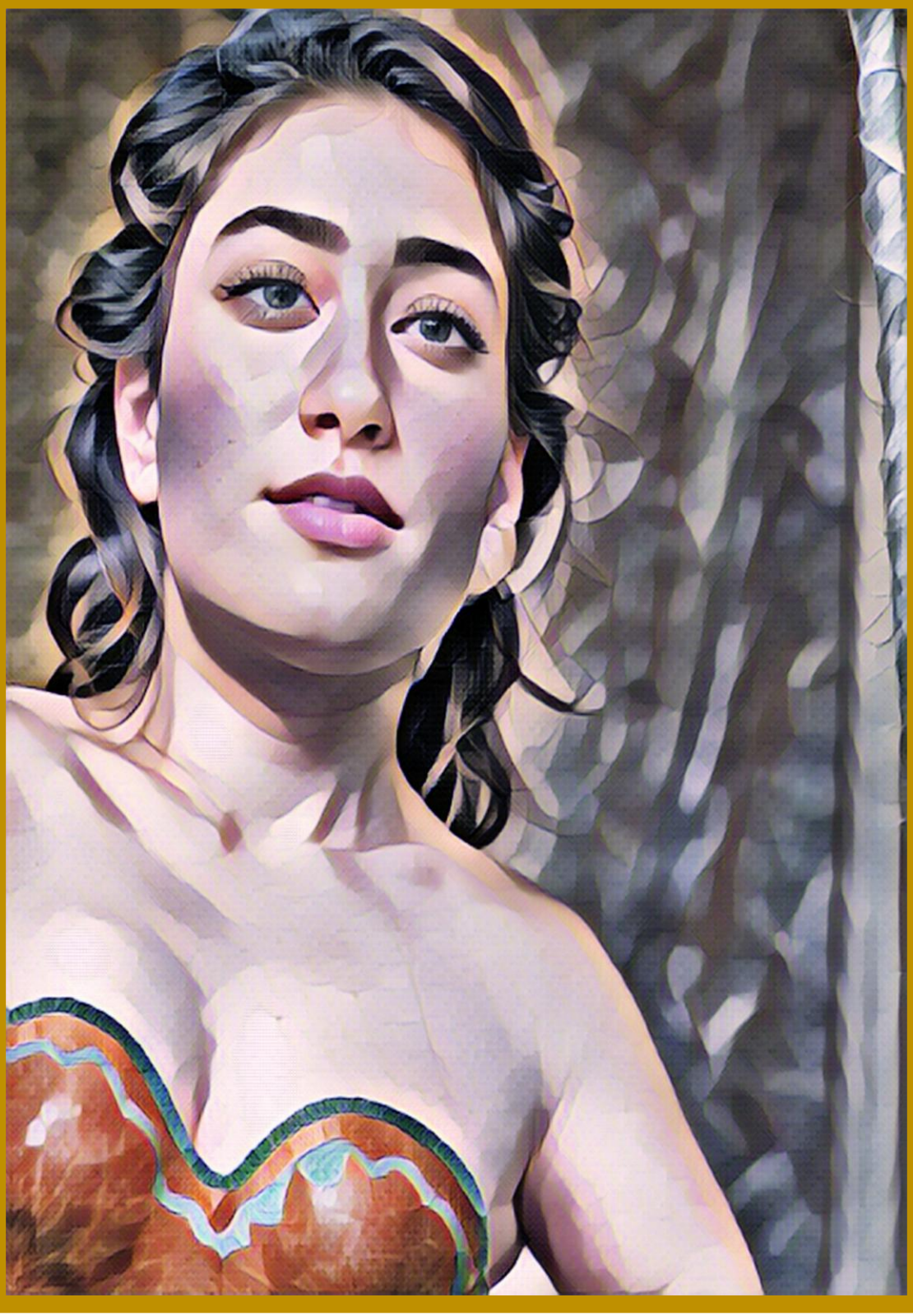

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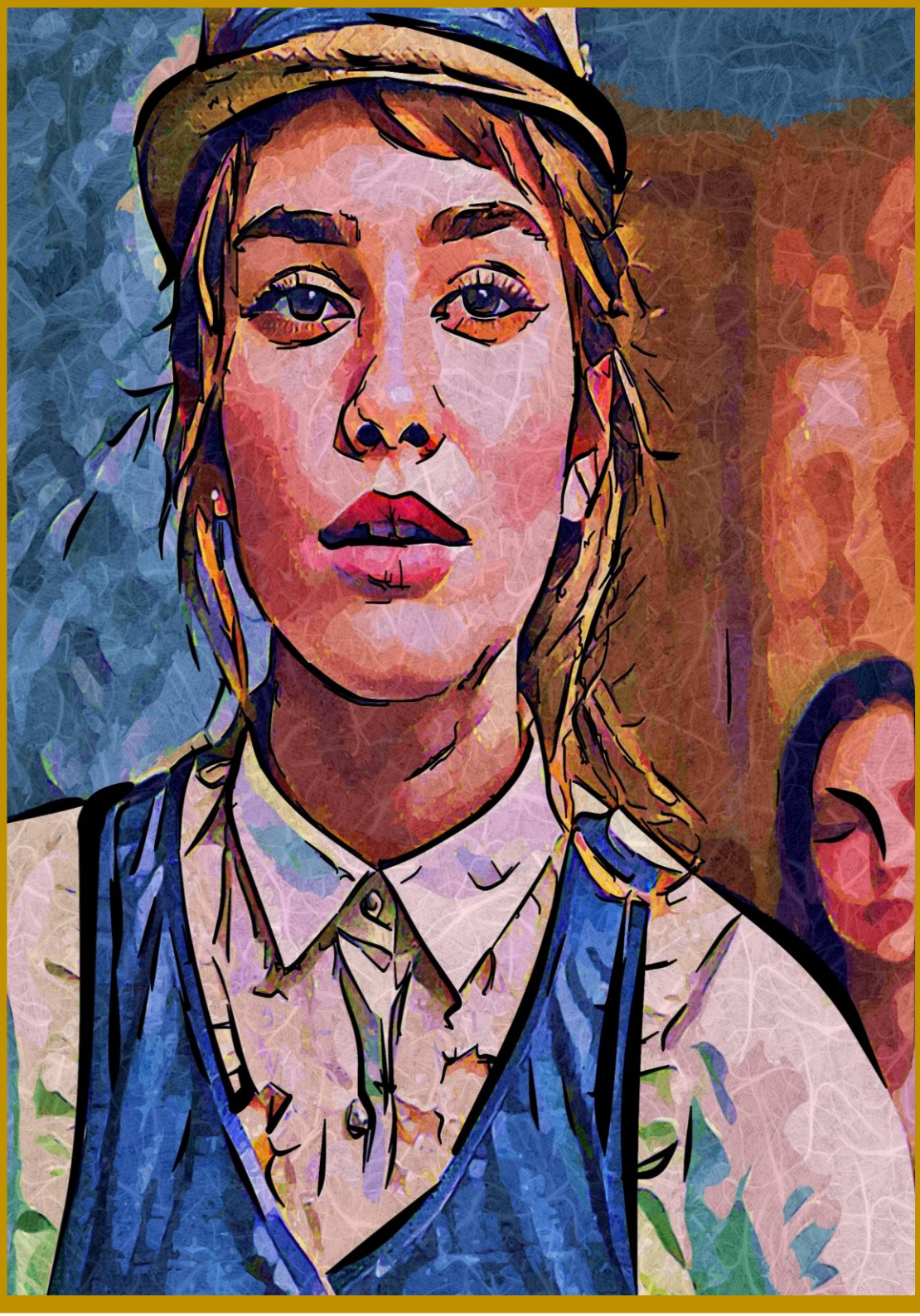

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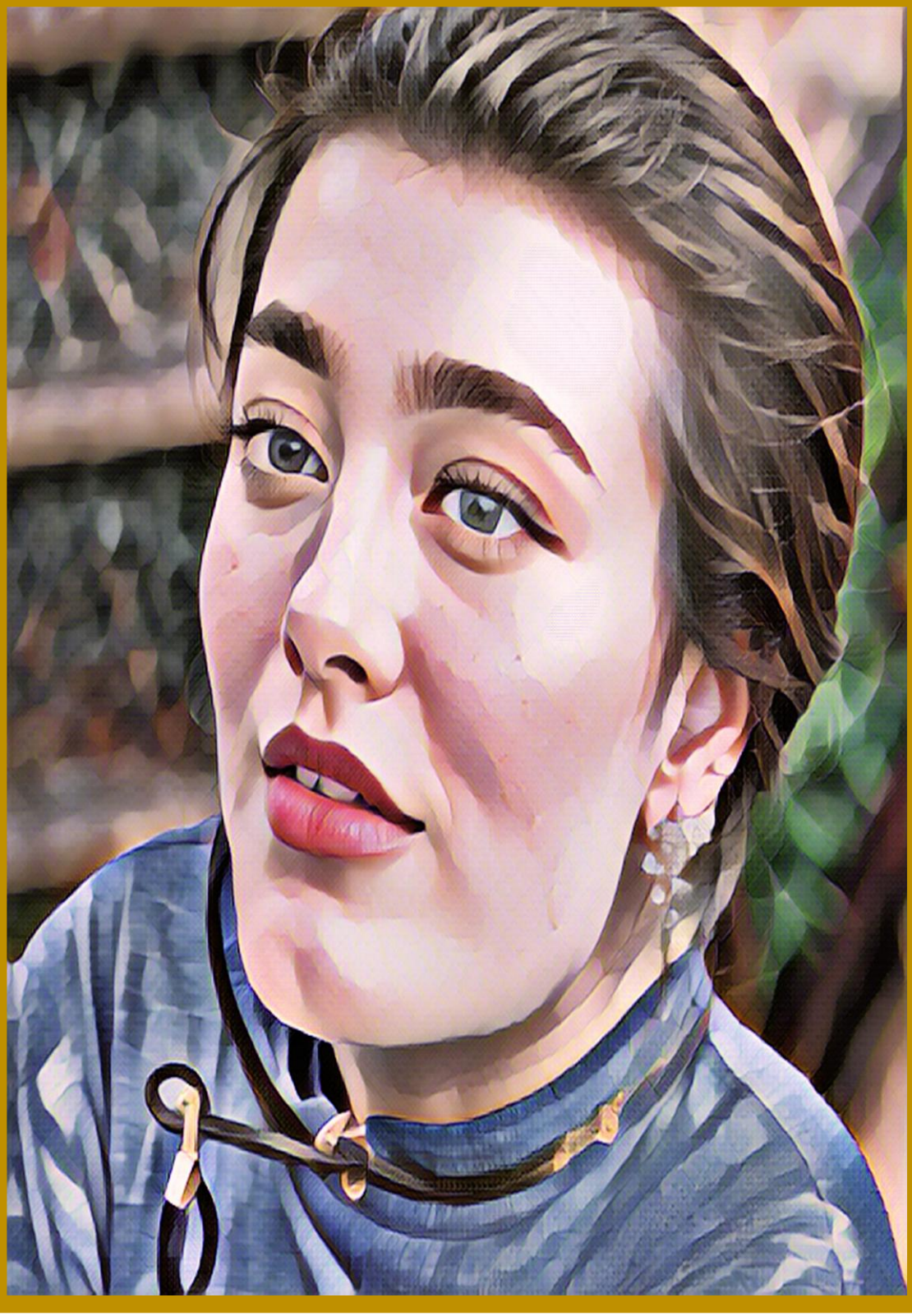

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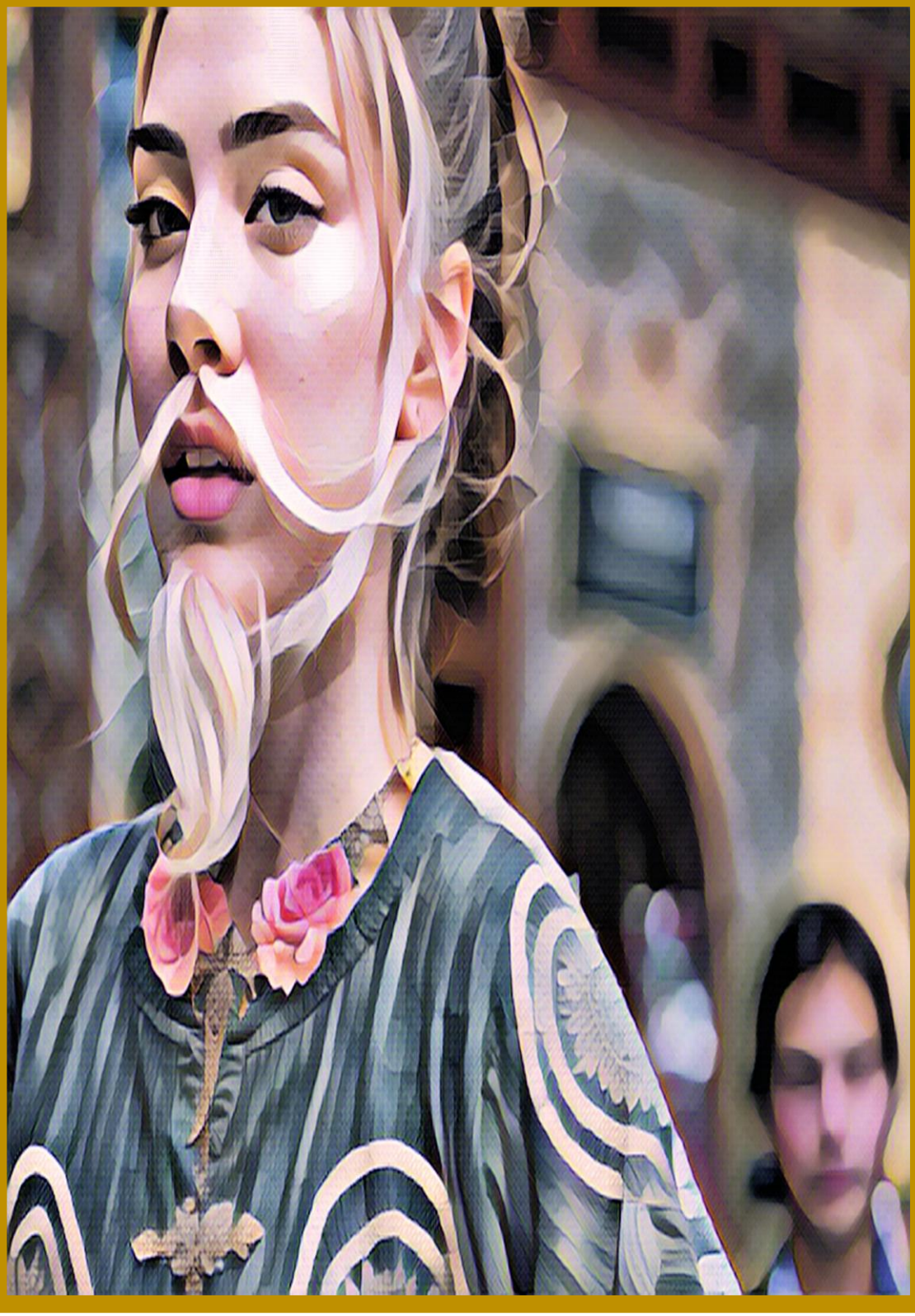

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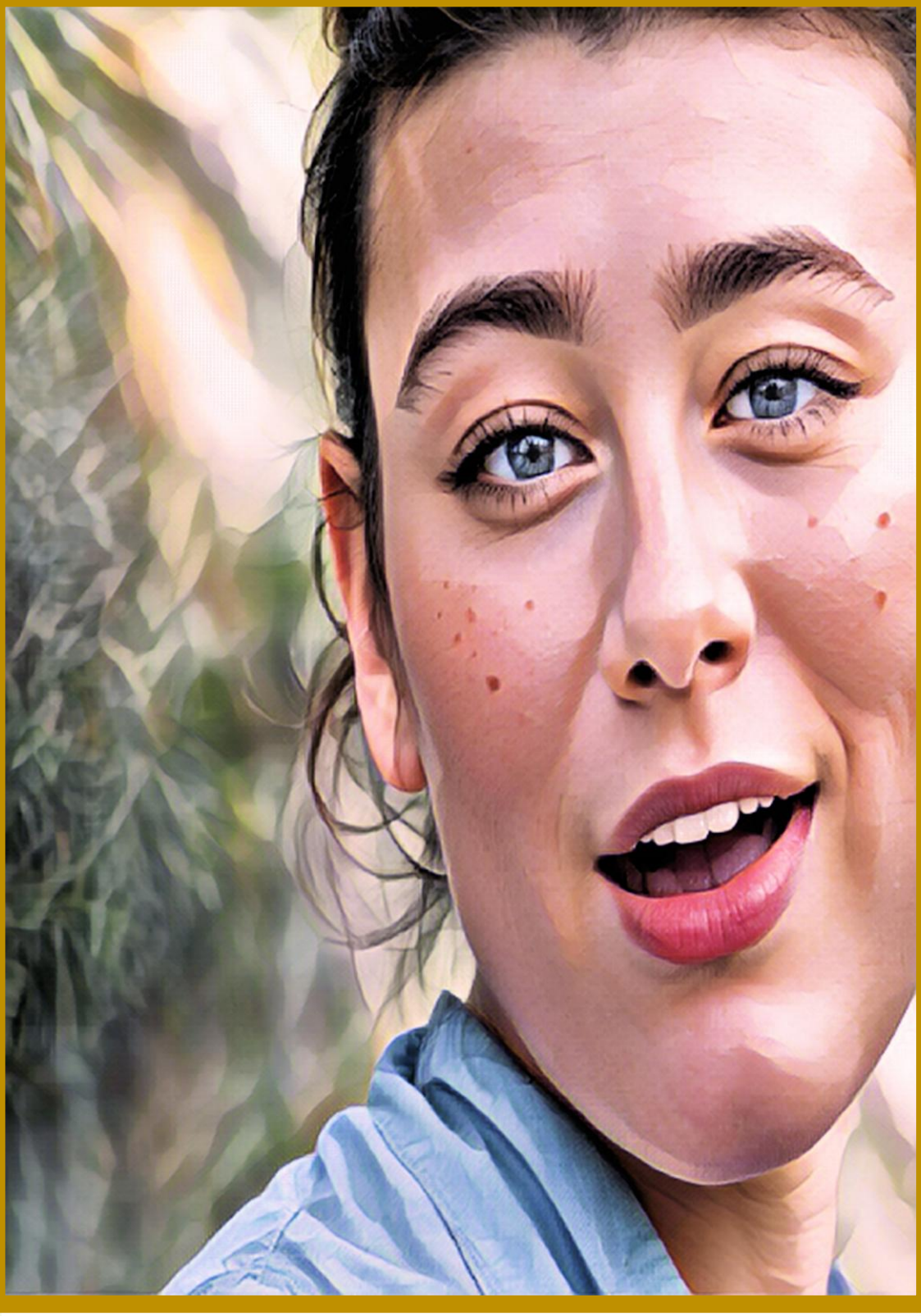

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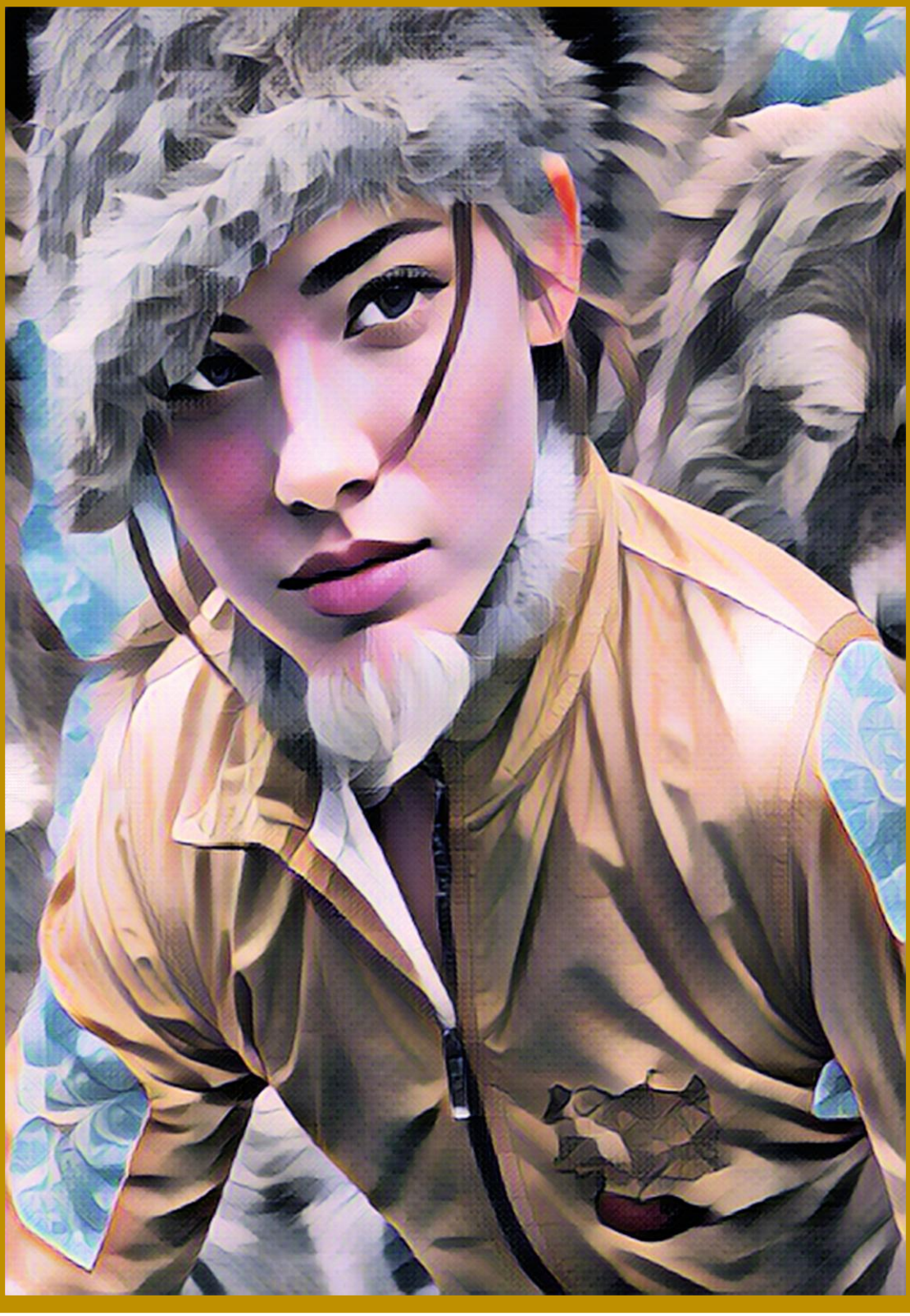

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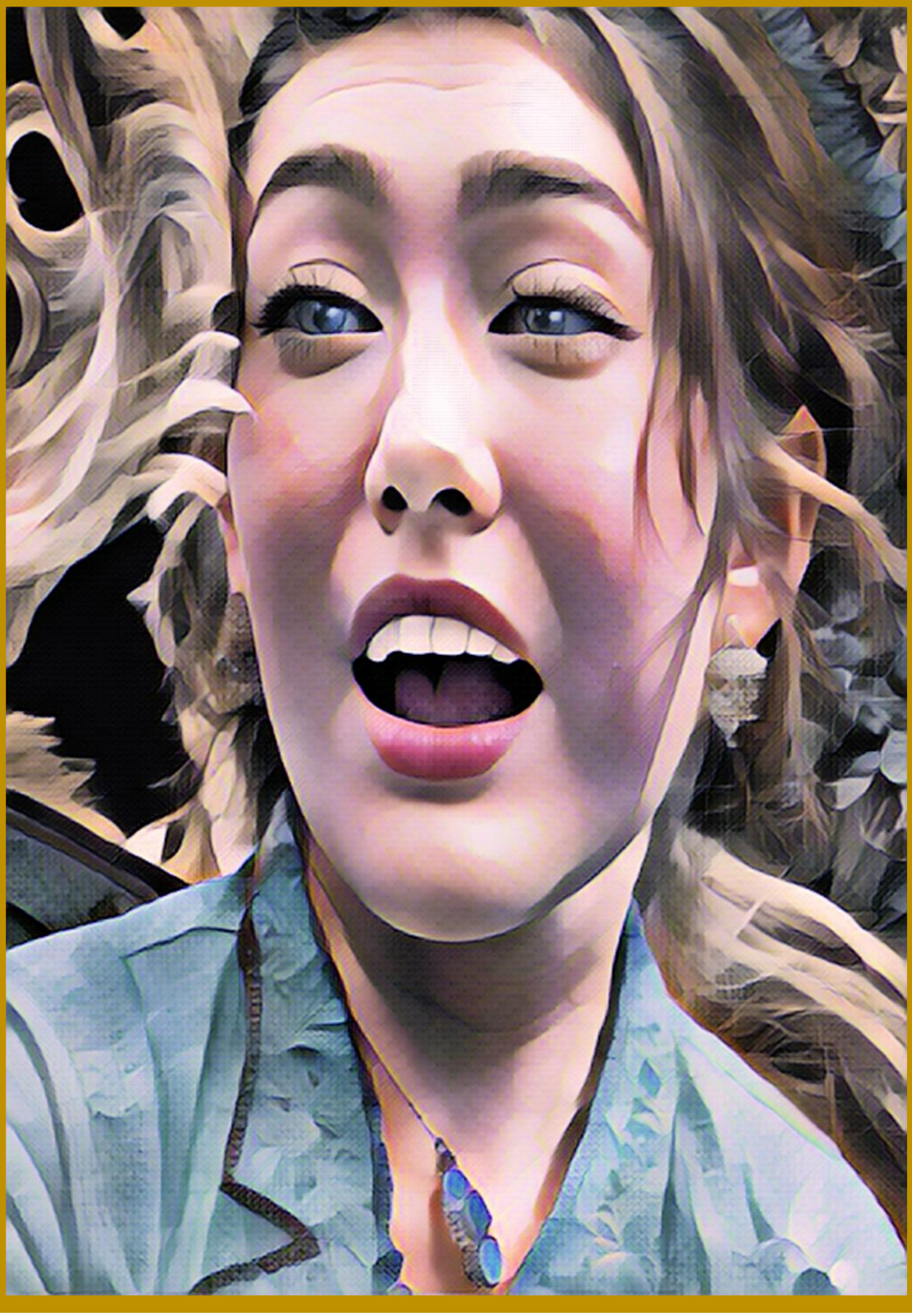

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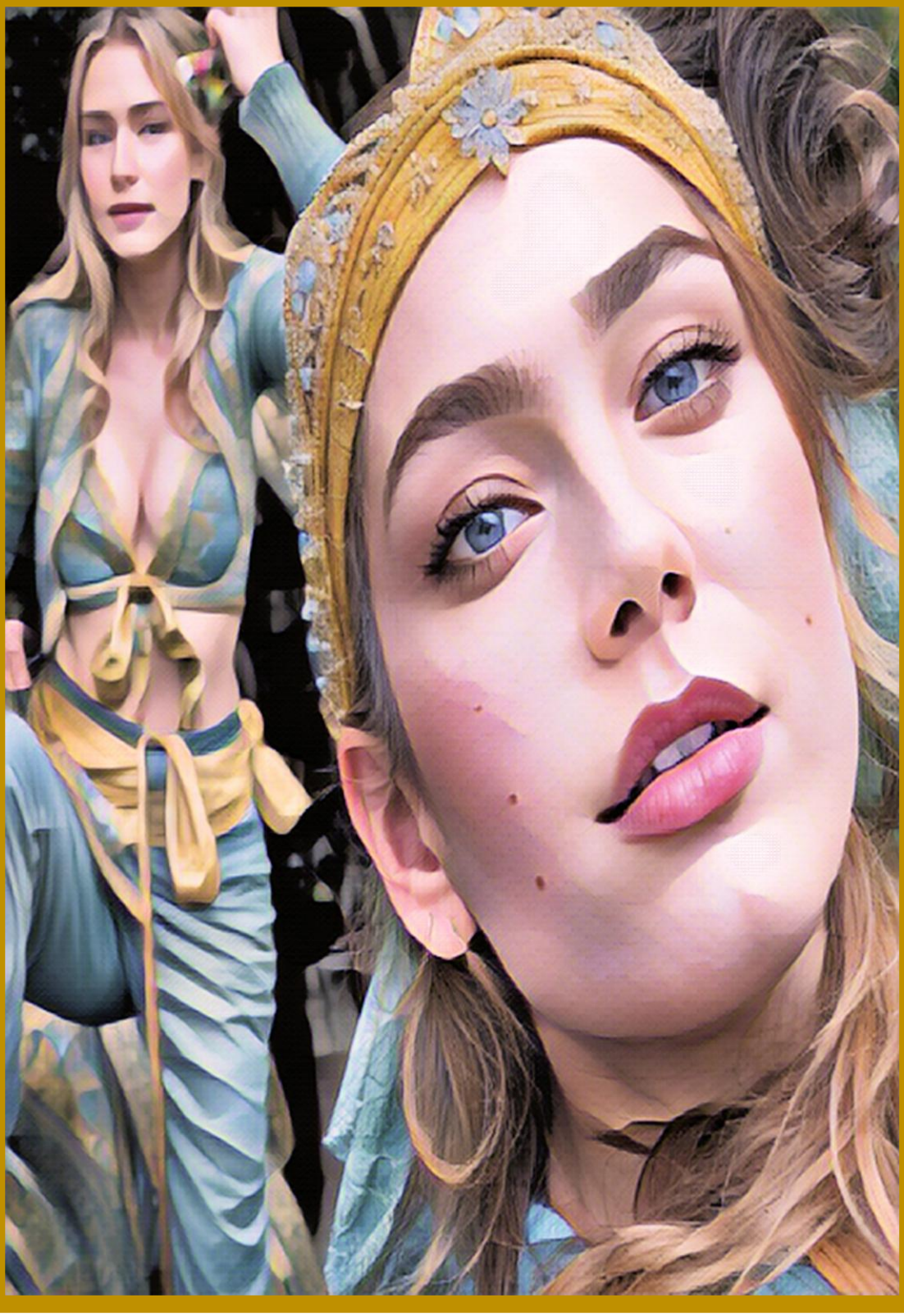

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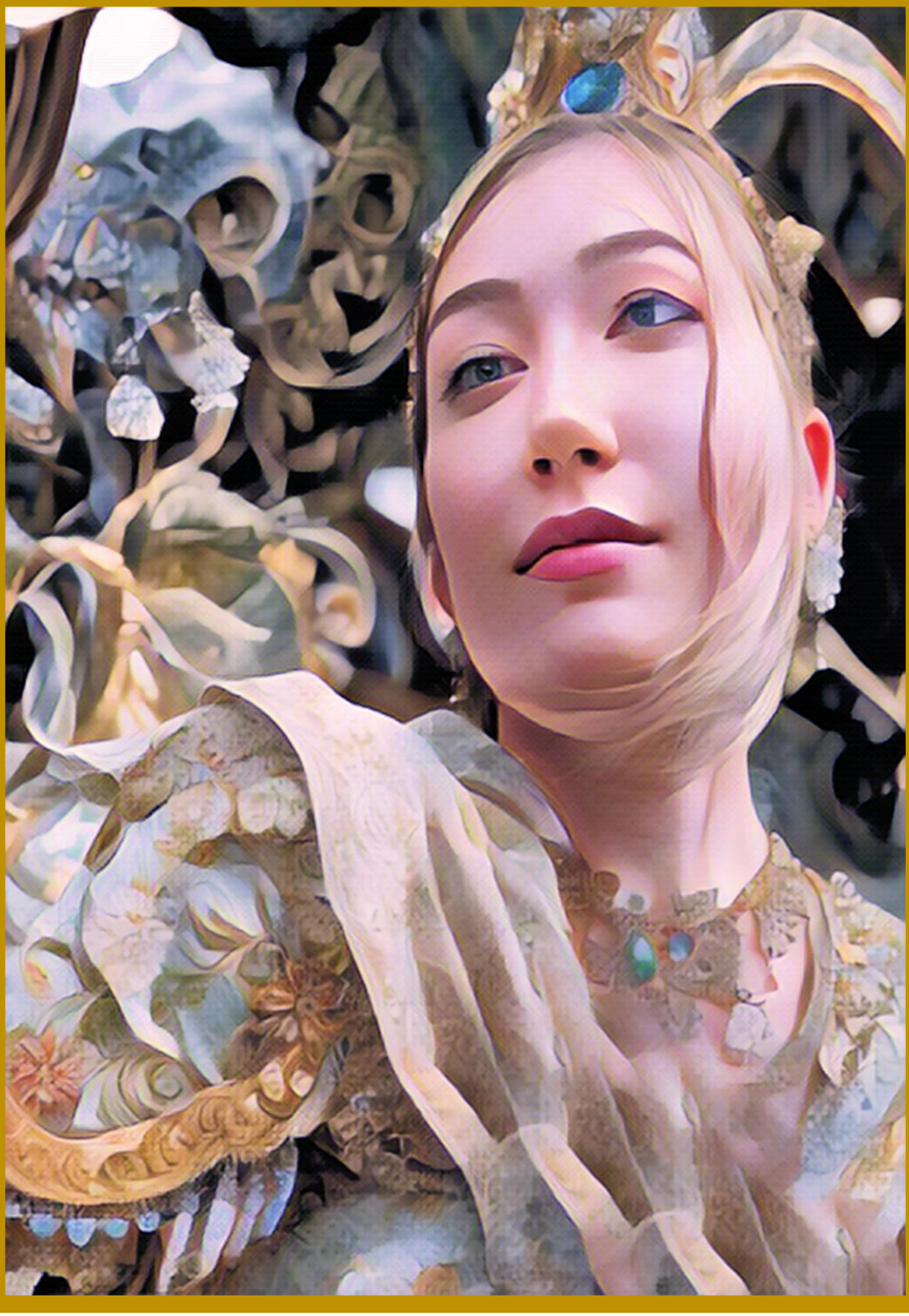

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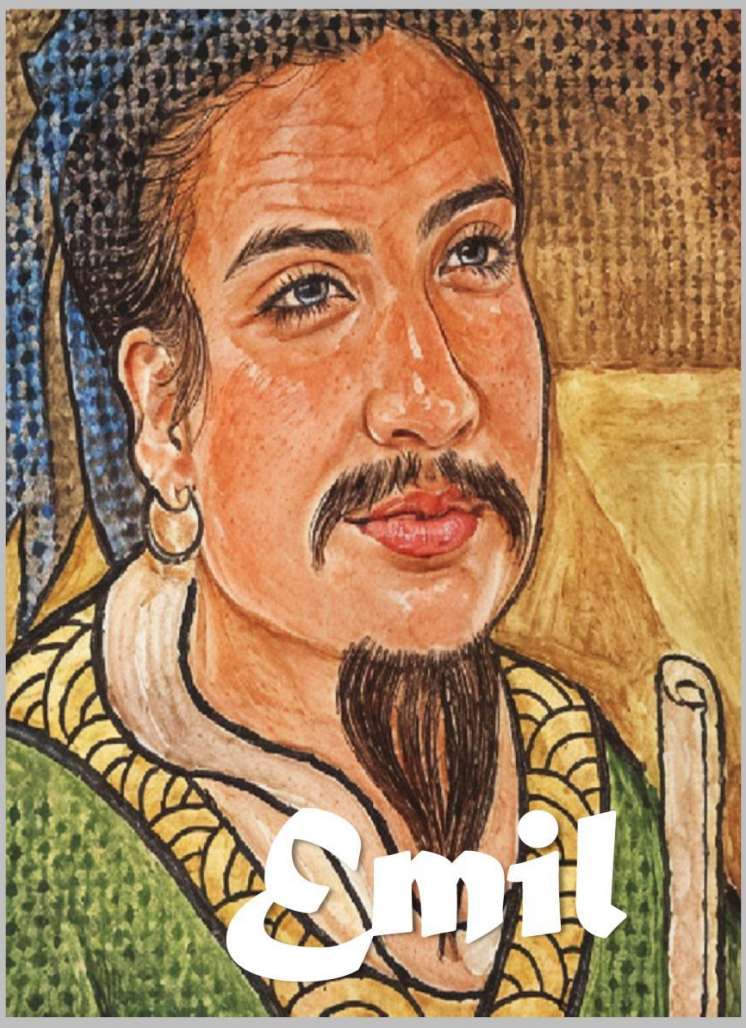

Giovanni Metro Stop Gallery

WWWG Productions Ltd. Singapore - 2026

Kitkat Gentleman's Lounge
Zhongshan Road, International Settlement
Shanghai, Republic of China

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GIOVANNI METRO STOP GALLERY

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SPRINGTIME

CATALOG 2026

GIOVANNI METRO STOP GALLERY

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SHANGHAI, REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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VOLUME TWO

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